remedy also. During Diwan Mr. Narayana Ayyar's time, the Ernakulam Municipality suggested the acquisition of some wet lands in the uninhabited area situated to the east of the toll-gate that stands on the Hill Palace road and to have that place used as the night-soil depot of the town. The acquisition charges will not be high, and if the property over which the present Depot stands is sold, the price fetched would be sufficient to acquire a plot in the place indicated by the Municipality. The Ernakulam Municipality may go in for a loan even for the purpose instead of casuing an eternal continuance nuisance to the public. With these few words, since the Government appear to be sympathetic in the matter, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

The Demand of Rs. 1,17,674 less Re. 1—under Public Health was put and carried.

17—Vaccination—Cranganur—Rs. 1,060.

Demand put and carried.

18—Sanitation and Conservancy—Cranganur Rs. 5,012.

Demand put and carried.

17—Law and Justice—Rs. 1,86,829.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—I rise to move for an allotment of Rs. 1,86,829 under 17—Law and Justice. There are several cut motions and therefore, I do not intend to make any speech at this stage. I request that the House will be pleased to grant the amount.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Sir, I may be permitted to move the three cut motions tabled by me under the head all together.

Deputy President.—Yes.

Motion No. 77.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—*(1) "To reduce the allotment of Rs. 5,503 for Law Department by Re. 1. The desirability of working out the following resolution moved by the Hon'ble Member Mr. T. K. Nayar and carried by the Legislative Council at its sitting on Tuesday the 20th February 1934 (about 2½ years ago):- "This Council recommends to the Government to formulate a*

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scheme to scale down agricultural debts in proportion to the fall in prices".

(2) "To reduce the allotment of Rs. 5,503 for Law Department by Re. 1. Government's failure in not having acted upon the following finding of theirs contained in Diwan's Proceedings dated 2nd March 1934, L. R. 3300/1109—about 2½ years ago—'Owing to the precipitous fall of agricultural prices, debts incurred by agriculturists five or more years ago on the security of their lands have now been increased by anything up to 300 per cent".

(3) "To reduce the allotment of Rs. 5,503 for 17—A-Law and Justice by Re. 1. The necessity of realizing the following resolution moved by the Hon'ble Member Mr. T. K. Nayar and carried by the Legislative Council at its sitting on Tuesday the 20th February 1934 (about 2½ years ago):—'This Council recommends to the Government to formulate a scheme to scale down agricultural debts in proportion to fall in prices".

* Sir, it is with great diffidence that I get up to move this cut motion. Time out of number have we pleaded for it. In the Proceedings of the Diwan dated 2nd March 1934, L-R-3300/1109, the following appears:—

"Owing to the precipitous fall of agricultural prices, debts incurred by agriculturists five or more years ago on the security of their lands have now been increased by anything up to 300 per cent."

Sir, I beg to submit that this is an exception to the rule. This is a variation to the routine to which we are accustomed. Here is an issue wherein a conclusion has been drawn by the Government from the premises of the non-officials. I should say the conclusion has been almost anticipated by the Government. If the Hon'ble Members will be pleased to examine the chronological order of this resolution as well as these proceedings, they will find that the proceedings alleged in this cut motion preceded the resolution I am speaking about. The resolution of the Hon'ble Member Mr. T. K. Nayar wanted a scaling down of agricultural debts according to the fall in prices. I say long before that in a proceedings, in a genuine proceedings, in the proclaimed and pronounced proceedings of the Cochin Government, in their official Gazette, they have admitted, they have conclusively admitted, this trend of the proposition we are now advocating. That is why I submit, Sir, that this is a novel experience. When we are asking for full responsible Government,

* Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

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Government come and say there are practical difficulties and say 'a question of time'. Again when we speak about the dependence of the judiciary on the executive or corruption in the departments, they will say that in the fulness of time the non-officials will realise that there is nothing of that sort.

Again, Sir, when we complain about the Police high-handedness, Government will say that our police are exceptionally good people, perhaps more modest, more gentlemanly than the proverbial lambs. So, I say, in marked contrast to this order of things, Government have themselves taken a view. To this ordinary official view of things coming from Government, we have given a final proof in advance and that even in advance of a resolution that has been passed by this House. That is why I say it is a novel thing, it is an exception to the rule, it is a variation to the generality of things we witness in this House.

Now, Sir, here there is a very strong issue involved in it. I say the very reputation of Government is at stake in this matter. One thing, I should say the only thing, about which our Government can be proud of is their authoritarianism. Leaving authoritarianism our Government according to me is a blank void. Here is a conclusion. Here is a Proceedings of the Diwan that the agricultural debts have increased up to 300 per cent. That was so about 3 years ago and in all this long, long interval, Government were not able to translate their own proposition. The order makes mention of the fact that the agricultural debts have increased by anything up to 300 per cent. If it has increased by 300 per cent it is the look-out of the people and the Government to see that that defect is removed. That responsibility they have not discharged. Once they have come to a reading of a particular situation in a particular way, it was up to them as an authoritarian Government—I do not call them a responsible Government—at least they have got the authoritarian character in them—to come forward with what they profess to be correct. In this case, I say there has been a departure even in that respect. They cannot exercise their own conclusion. So, I say even in this matter Government had no more ground for taking pride. That is my humble submission.

Now, Sir, there is another point. I admit, I allege, I confess, that some of the members of the Treasury Bench may be justified in saying that this is an extraordinary measure. But my submission against that is an extraordinary situation requires an extraordinary measure. Emergency always requires emergent legislation and emergent action. Hon'ble Members

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here will be pleased to remember that in certain emergencies, in certain occasions, for example during War, it will be penal to drink milk and so requires legislation for that. A situation may arise here. That is my submission. The Government will find the present situation even graver still. Drinking more than half a seer of milk will be penalised during War. So, particular situations may require emergent legislation. There is no use of saying 'times' and it may be preposterous in saying 'times'. Now let us see what the position is. Government have come to the conclusion that the agricultural debts have increased out of proportion. Even this Council will be pleased to recollect that I asked a question to the Government. Benches as to what percentage of the actual debtors of this country will be benefited according to their anticipations by the work of the Land Mortgage Bank. They could not answer it. The mere fact that they cannot answer it shows that there is only a microscopic section that are benefited by it. My submission is take the land tenure obtainable in Cochin. The Land Mortgage Bank as it is constituted at present will not be a success. We have got other examples—the examples of Travancore as well as some Native States as well as Provincial Governments in British India. Land Mortgage Banks are only ordinary measures. It is not a measure intended for a peculiar situation. It is only a normal working of Government activities. So, Sir, we are in duty bound to censure Government in not having made any attempt in the direction adverted to above. I pray that my Hon'ble colleagues be pleased to offer a united strong front in this matter.

(The Hon'ble the President resumed the Chair at this stage.)

Mr. A. Narayana Menon.—Sir, I oppose the motion. The proceedings quoted here were not passed after due enquiries. Even if the facts stated therein were true,during those days, the facts are otherwise today. Prices are fluctuating. And if we come to individual cases, we do not know the conditions under which the individual debts have been incurred.

Then as regard the fall in the price of properties, the fall has not been uniform in all cases. For instance, in places near public roads or in the case of lands which are productive, prices have not gone so low as is stated in the proceedings quoted by the mover.

Again, individual cases of loans stand on different footings. I shall cite an instance. Suppose a man has borrowed money

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for purchasing property and the property was giving him very good returns, say more than the interest that he had to pay to his creditor. He was enjoying the property for a long time. Now that the prices have fallen down, is he to say that the loan due to the creditor is to be scaled down? He has no right to dictate such terms on the lame excuse that he is an agriculturist. These radical measures are not sure remedies. We must adopt other remedial measures, for instance rural re-construction, improvement and expansion of the operations of the Co-operative Department, institution of Debt Conciliation Boards acceptable to the creditors and debtors. These are the various measures that we have to adopt and not all on a sudden scale down debts.

One important thing that we have to remember is this. Here we have not a creditor class so to say. The man who is a creditor to one person is a debtor to another person. That being the case no such extraordinary remedy can be adopted in a place like Cochin. In the case of professional money-lenders who have sucked the life blood of the agricultural population such measures may be justified. But that is not the case of the creditors that we get in Cochin. There are among agriculturists themselves creditors, who owe money to non-agriculturists. Are we to scale down their debts and to increase the number of bankrupts in the State? What I say is that the remedy suggested is too radical to be adopted so far as this State goes and that this motion deserves to be thrown out.

മിസ്റ്റർ കെ. അയ്യപ്പൻ.— സർ, ഞാൻ ഈ ഉപക്ഷേപത്തെ പിൻതാങ്ങുന്നു. ഈ രാജ്യത്തെ കടക്കാരെ രക്ഷിക്കാൻ എന്തെങ്കിലും ഒരു പദ്ധതി ആത്മാർത്ഥമായി സ്വീകരിക്കണമെന്നു ഗവൺമെൻറിന് ഉദ്ദേശമുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഇതിൽ എന്തെങ്കിലും കാര്യമായ ഒരു തീരുമാനം ഗവൺമെൻറു ചെയ്യേണ്ടതാണ്. (ഹിയർ, ഹിയർ) ഈ കാര്യത്തിൽ ഗവൺമെൻറ് ഒന്നും ചെയ്തിട്ടില്ല എന്നു ഞാൻ പറയുന്നില്ല. ഗവൺമെൻറു പ്രധാനമായി ഈ കാര്യത്തിൽ ചെയ്തതു് ഒരു ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കു് ഏർപ്പെടുത്തുകയാണ്. ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കു് ഈ രാജ്യത്തെ ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ കടക്കാരെ രക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ പറുന്നവിധത്തിലല്ല നിൽക്കുന്നതു്. എന്നാൽ അതുകൊണ്ടു തീരെ പ്രയോജനമില്ലെന്നും പറയുന്നില്ല. കുറെ പ്രയോജനം അതുകൊണ്ടുണ്ട്. വസ്തു ഈടുള്ളവർക്കു സംഖ്യ കിട്ടും, അതുയും ഉപകാരമുണ്ട്. അതുകൊണ്ടു് ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കു് ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയതിൽ ഗവൺമെൻറിനെ അഭിനന്ദിക്കുന്നു. പക്ഷെ കടക്കാരിൽ ഏതു ശതമാനത്തിനു ലാൻറു് മോർട്ടു് ഗേജ് ബാങ്കു് രക്ഷയാകുമെന്നാലോചിക്കണം. കടക്കാരെ രക്ഷിക്കുവാനാണെങ്കിൽ ഒരു ഗണ്യമായ ശതമാനം കടക്കാർക്കു രക്ഷയാ

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കുന്നൊരേർപ്പാടായിരിക്കണം. അല്ലാതെ ലാൻറുമോർട്ടുഗേജു ബാങ്കു് കടക്കാരെ രക്ഷിക്കാനുള്ള ഏർപ്പാടാണെന്നു പറയുവാൻ തരമില്ല. കടക്കാരുടെ സ്ഥിതിയെപ്പററി അന്വേഷണം നടത്താൻ ഏർപ്പെട്ടത്തിയ കമ്മിററിക്കാരുടെ അന്വേഷണത്തിൻെറ ഫലമായി ഗവമ്മെണ്ടു് ഒരുദ്യോഗസ്ഥനെക്കൊണ്ടു നടത്തിയ അന്വേഷണത്തിൻെറ ഫലമായും വളരെ അധികംപേർ, ജനങ്ങളിൽ ഒരു വലിയ പക്ഷം, ഭൂമിയുടമസ്ഥന്മാരിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷം കടത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട കിടക്കുകയാണെന്നും അങ്ങിനെ കടത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട കിടക്കുന്നവർ അധികവും ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ വിലക്കു വസ്തുവിൻെറ ഈടോളവും ഈടിൽ കവിഞ്ഞും കടത്തിൽ മുങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നും തെളിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ടു്. ഇങ്ങനെയിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു കാര്യത്തിൽ ഒരു തീരുമാനത്തിനു പററിയ മാർഗ്ഗമാണു ഗവമ്മെൻറു തേടേണ്ടതു്. അതിനു കടം കുറയ്ക്കുകയേ വഴിയുള്ളൂ. അതു രണ്ടു മാതിരി. ആ കടം ഒന്നുകിൽ ഭവനഗരിൽ ചെയ്തതുപോലെ കടം കുറച്ചു് ആ കുറച്ചുഭാഗം ഗവമ്മെൻറു വഹിക്കണം. അങ്ങിനെ ചെയ്യാൻ ചെറിയ രാജ്യമായ ഭവനഗറിനു സാധിച്ചെങ്കിലും കൊച്ചിക്കു സാധിക്കുമെന്നു തോന്നുന്നില്ല. ഇവിടെ സാധിക്കാത്ത മാതിരി അതു വലിയ സംഖ്യ ഗവമ്മെൻറുണ്ടാക്കേണ്ടിവന്നേക്കും. അതുകൊണ്ടു ഭവനഗർ പദ്ധതി കൊച്ചിയിൽ പ്രായോഗികമാണെന്നു തോന്നുന്നില്ല.

പിന്നൊരു പദ്ധതിയുള്ളതു കടം വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കുകയാണു്. ഇതു മുതലുവെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കിയും കൂടിശ്ശികയായ പലിശയെങ്കിലും വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കിയും നടത്താം. ഇതു കാൺഫിസ് കേഷനായതുകൊണ്ടു പാടില്ലെന്നു വാദമുണ്ടു്. വസ്തുവിനു വളരെ വിലക്രുടിയിരുന്ന കാലത്തു കൊടുത്തതാണു കടം. അന്നു കൊടുത്ത പണത്തിനു കിട്ടുന്ന വസ്തു ഇപ്പോൾ അതിലും വളരെ ചുരുങ്ങിയ വിലയ്ക്കു കിട്ടും. കടക്കാർക്കു കൊടുത്തിട്ടുള്ള പണംകൊണ്ടു് അന്നു വാങ്ങാമായിരുന്ന വസ്തു ഇപ്പോൾ കടം വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കി ബാക്കിയുണ്ടാകുന്ന പണംകൊണ്ടു വാങ്ങാമെന്നിരിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടു കടംകൊടുത്തവർക്കു ഇപ്പോൾ വാസ്തവത്തിൽ നഷ്ടമില്ല. വസ്തുവിൻെറ വില അതുയർത്തുകയും പണത്തിൻെറ വില അതുയർത്തുകയും ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ടു്. അതുകൊണ്ടു കടംവെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കുന്നതു കാൺഫിസ് കേഷനാകയില്ലെന്നു ഗവമ്മെൻറിനു വ്യാഖ്യാനംകൊണ്ടു സമർത്ഥിക്കാവുന്നതാണു്. കാൺഫിസ് കേഷൻ പാടില്ലെന്നുള്ള തത്വമാണു ഗവമ്മെൻറു സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നതെങ്കിൽ ഈ വ്യാഖ്യാനത്തെ ശരണംപ്രാപിക്കയേ തരമുള്ളൂ. പക്ഷേ പൊതുനന്മയ്ക്കു വേണ്ടി ഗവമ്മെൻറു് ആവശ്യമായാൽ കാൺഫിസ് കേഷൻ സ്വീകരിക്കണമെന്നാണു എനിയ്ക്കു പറയാനുള്ളതു്. അതു പലരെയൊക്കെ ഈ ഗവമ്മെൻറുതന്നെ സ്വീകരിച്ചിട്ടുമുണ്ടു്. ടെനൻസി റഗ്ലേഷൻ നടപ്പാക്കിയപ്പോൾ ജന്മികൾ കാൺഫിസ് കേഷൻ വാദംകൊണ്ടാണു് അതിനെ എതിർത്തതു്. അവരുടെ വാദത്തിൽ കുറെയൊക്കെ കാര്യമില്ലാതിരുന്നില്ല. എങ്കിലും ഗവമ്മെൻറു് അതു സ്വീകരിച്ചില്ല. പലിശ വെട്ട

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ക്കുറക്കാൻ ആൻറണി കമ്മിറ്റി ശുപാർശ ചെയ്തു. ആ ശുപാർശ കമ്മിറ്റിയിലെ ഗവൺമെൻറു മെമ്പർമാരും അനുകൂലിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. മുതൽ വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കുന്നതുപോലെ പലിശ വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കുന്നതും കാൺഫിസ് കേഷനാണ്. മുതലുപോലെ പലിശയും ഉടമസ്ഥൻറെ വകയാണല്ലൊ. അതുകൊണ്ട് അതു വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കാൻ പറയുന്നതു് എങ്ങിനെ കാൺഫിസ് കേഷനല്ലെന്നു പറയും.

ഗവൺമെൻറ് കടം വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കുന്ന നയം എടുത്താൽ രാജ്യത്തിൻറെ ക്രെഡിറ്റു പോകുമെന്നും അതുകൊണ്ടു ഗവൺമെൻറിനു ലോൺ റെയിസ് ചെയ്യാനും മറ്റും സാധിക്കയില്ലെന്നും ദിവാൻ പ്രസിഡണ്ടു് ഒരു പ്രസംഗത്തിൽ പറയുകയുണ്ടായി. ഇവിടെ കടം വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കുന്നതു പുറത്തുനിന്നു കടംതരുന്നവരുടെ വ്യവസ്ഥകൾക്കു ബാധകമാകയില്ല. അതുകൊണ്ട് ഇവിടെ കടംവെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കിയാലും രാജ്യത്തിൻറെ ക്രെഡിറ്റു് പോകുമെന്നു ഭയപ്പെടാൻ അവകാശമില്ല.

മേൽപറഞ്ഞ കാൺഫിസ് കേഷൻ വലിയ വിഷമംകൂടാതെ നടത്താനുള്ള ഒരു മാർഗ്ഗമുണ്ട്. ഡെറ്റ് കൺസീലിയേഷൻ ബോർഡുകൾ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനു് ഇപ്പോൾ ആലോചനയിലിരിക്കുന്ന നിയമനിർമ്മാണത്തിൽ കുറെ നിർബ്ബന്ധാംശം കൂത്തിവെച്ചാൽ അതു സാധിക്കുന്നതാണ്. ബോർഡുകളുടെ ശുപാർശകൾ കടക്കാരും കടം കൊടുത്തവരും സ്വീകരിക്കണമെന്ന നിർബ്ബന്ധം വെക്കണം. ബോർഡു ശുപാർശ ചെയ്യുന്നതു് ഓരോ കടത്തിൻറേയും പ്രത്യേക സ്ഥിതിഗതികൾ നോക്കിയായിരിക്കും. അതുകൊണ്ട് ആർക്കും വിഷമം നേരിടാതെ നോക്കാൻ ബോർഡിനു സാധിക്കും.

ഇപ്പോൾ കടക്കാരെ രക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ ഇങ്ങിനെ വല്ലതും ഗവൺമെൻറു ചെയ്തില്ലെങ്കിൽ വരുന്ന ഭവിഷ്യത്തുകളും ഓർക്കേണ്ടതാവശ്യമാണ്. ദിവാൻജി ഈയിടെ കാളേജിൽ ചെയ്ത ജൂബിലി പ്രസംഗത്തിൽ പാർലിമെൻററി ഡെമോക്രസിയുടെ മാഹാത്മ്യം വിശദമാക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. അതു നടക്കാൻ ചില അടിസ്ഥാന തത്വങ്ങളിൽ എല്ലാ കക്ഷിക്കാരും യോജിക്കുന്ന ഒരു സ്ഥിതി വേണമെന്നു പറയുകയുണ്ടായി. സമുദായ സ്ഥിതിയെ അടിമറിക്കുന്ന അഭിപ്രായമുള്ള കക്ഷികൾ പാടില്ല. കടക്കാരെ ഇപ്പോൾ രക്ഷിച്ചില്ലെങ്കിൽ രാജ്യത്തു നല്ല നിലയിൽ കഴിയുന്നവരായ ജനങ്ങളിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷവും ഒരു നിലയുമില്ലാത്തവരാകും. സമുദായ സ്ഥിതിയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനം മറിക്കുന്ന ആലോചനകൾ ഇളക്കിവിട്ടാൽ ഒരു അസ്വസ്ഥത അവരുടെ ഇടയിൽ പരക്കും. അങ്ങിനെവരുന്നതു പാർലിമെൻററി ഡെമോക്രസി നടക്കാൻ സാദ്ധ്യമല്ലാതാക്കും. കടം വന്നവർ നശിക്കട്ടെ, അതു അവരുടെ വിധിയാണെന്നും മറ്റുമുള്ള വേദാന്തങ്ങൾ പറഞ്ഞാൽ ജനങ്ങൾ കേൾക്കയില്ല. വിധി എല്ലാം മനുഷ്യൻ ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നതും മനുഷ്യനു മാറാവുന്നതുമാണ്. മനുഷ്യയത്നംകൊണ്ടു വരുത്താൻ പാടില്ലാത്തതായി ഒന്നും ഇല്ല. ഈ ആശയമാണ് ഇപ്പോ

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ം ലോകത്തിൽ ഉറച്ചുവരുന്നതു്. ഇനി ദൈവവിധിയും മറും പറഞ്ഞു ജനങ്ങളെ കഷ്ടസ്ഥിതിയിൽ അടക്കിയിടാൻ ആക്കും സാധിക്കയില്ല.

Mr. George Parakkal.—I support this motion. I come from a constituency which is absolutely agricultural and from my experience of my constituency I can say that the middle classes in my constituency are already dying out. Even the very rich families are now tottering. In my humble opinion, the only remedy that the Government can do if they want to save the middle class of Cochin is to adopt the scaling down of the debts. Otherwise, it will be too late for them to save the middle class of Cochin. They will be no more. They are actually dying out. With these words, I support this motion.

* മിസ്റ്റർ കെ. എം. കുഞ്ഞുമൊയ്തീൻ.— സർ, ജനക്ഷേമത്തിനത്യാവശ്യമായ പരിഷ്കാരങ്ങളെ എതുക്കുനാതിൽ ഗവമ്മെൻറിനുകൂടി സാധിക്കാത്ത വിധത്തിലും ഗവമ്മെൻറിനു അസപ്സ്ഥത തോന്നുനാ വിധത്തിലും നമ്മുടെ വൈറിലമെമ്പർ ചെയ്ത പ്രസ്താവനയെക്കുറിച്ചു് എനിക്കു വ്യസനവും അത്ഭുതവും തോന്നുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻെറ പ്രധാനമായ വാദഗതി, അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻെറ വീക്ഷണകോണം വളരെ വക്രമാണെന്നുള്ള സംഗതി ഞാൻ ഇവിടെ പറഞ്ഞുകൊള്ളുന്നു. പക്ഷെ ഈ സംഗതിയിൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻെറ വാദഗതി പ്രധാനമായിട്ടുള്ളതു് ക്രെഡിറേറഴ്സ് ആയിട്ടുള്ളവർതന്നെ ഡെറേഴ്സും ആയിട്ടുള്ളതുകൊണ്ടു് ഈ പ്രമേയത്തിൽ പറയുന്ന മാതിരി നടപ്പിൽ വരുത്തുവാൻ സാധിക്കുകയില്ലെന്നാണു്. ഈ പ്രമേയത്തിൽ അദ്ദേഹം ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ, അദ്ദേഹം പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ, അദ്ദേഹം പൊക്കിക്കാണിക്കുന്ന വിധത്തിലുള്ള വൈഷമ്യങ്ങളില്ലെന്നു സംഗതി ആദ്യമായി പ്രസ്താവിച്ചുകൊള്ളട്ടെ. സർ, ഈ സംഗതിയെക്കുറിച്ചു് ഇവിടെ അതിഗംഭീരങ്ങളായ പ്രസംഗങ്ങളും നടന്നിട്ടുള്ളതുകൊണ്ടു ഞാൻ അധികമൊന്നും പറയണമെന്നു വിചാരിക്കുന്നില്ല. നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടുകാരുടെ സൌഭാഗ്യത്തെ ഏറ്റവും ശക്തിയായി ബാധിക്കുന്ന ഈ പ്രമേയത്തെ നാട്ടിൻേറയും നാട്ടുകാരുടേയും രക്ഷയെ ഭയങ്കരമായി ബാധിക്കുന്ന ഈ പ്രശ്നത്തെ വെറും നിസ്സാരമായി കരുതരുതെന്നു ഗവമ്മെൻറിനോടപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നു. നാട്ടിൻെറ സൌഭാഗ്യത്തിനടിസ്ഥാനമായ കൃഷീവലന്മാർ നശിക്കുമ്പോൾ, കടത്തിൽനിന്നു് അവരെ മോചിപ്പിക്കാത്തപക്ഷം അവർ പാപ്പരായി ഈ നാട്ടിൻെറ നട്ടെല്ലായ അവർ നശിക്കുമ്പോൾ, ഏറ്റവും ശക്തിഹീനരായി, ഏറ്റവും അലസന്മാരായി പോകാതെ അവരെ രക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടതു നമ്മുടെ മുമതലയാണു്. അതുകൊണ്ടാണു് ഈ സംഗതിയെ ഇത്ര വലിയനിലയിൽ ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട തെക്കെ ഈഴവമെമ്പർ ഗവമ്മെൻറിനെ ഉൽ

* Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

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ബോധിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതു്. ഗവമ്മെൻറു സാധാരണ പറയുന്ന ഒരു സമാധാനം ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കു് സ്ഥാപിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടല്ലോ അതുകൊണ്ടു കടക്കാരെ രക്ഷിക്കാൻ സാധിക്കുമെന്നുള്ളതാണു്. ഈ വാദത്തെ വളരെ ശക്തിയായ വിധം എതുക്കേണ്ടതാണെന്നു ഞാൻ വിചാരിക്കുന്നു. നിസ്സാരമായ വിധിയിന്മേൽ ഗവമ്മെൻറു ചെയ്യുന്ന രക്ഷാകർമ്മം സിവിൽകോർട്ടു ചെയ്യുന്ന സമ്പ്രദായത്തെ ഞാനെതിർക്കുന്നു. നാട്ടിൽ കടക്കാരുടെ കടം വർദ്ധിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. വസ്തുക്കളുടെ വില താണുപോയിരിക്കുന്നു. അവരെല്ലാം വളരെ ദയനീയമായ സ്ഥിതിയിൽ എത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. അവർക്കു അസംതൃപ്തത വർദ്ധിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഈ വക പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്കു നിവാരണമായി ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കുകൊണ്ടു യാതൊരു പ്രയോജനവും ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതല്ല എന്നു നാം ആലോചിക്കണം. കടക്കാരിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷം ആളുകളേയും രക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കു ഫലപ്രദമാകുന്നില്ല. കർഷകരായ സാധുക്കളുടെ കടം വസ്തുവിൻെറ വിലയേക്കാൾ കടന്നുപോയിരിക്കുന്നു. അങ്ങിനെയുള്ള അവരെ ഈ ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കുകൊണ്ടു് എങ്ങിനെ രക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കും? വലുതായ ഈടു കൊടുക്കുവാൻ പ്രാപ്തന്മാരായിട്ടുള്ള വർക്കു ലാൻറുമോർട്ടഗേജു ബാങ്കിൽനിന്നു് ഒരുപക്ഷേ സംഖ്യ കിട്ടിയെന്നു വന്നാലും ഇതുകൊണ്ടു മറ്റുള്ളവരുടെ, വസ്തുക്കളില്ലാത്ത കർഷകന്മാരുടെ ആവശ്യം നിറവേറ്റുവാൻ സാധിക്കുമോ എന്നു ഗവമ്മെൻറു് ആലോചിക്കണം.

ഈ പ്രമേയത്തിൽ അടങ്ങിയിട്ടുള്ള കടം വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കേണ്ട ആവശ്യത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു് പല ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട മെമ്പർമാരും ഇവിടെ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചുകഴിഞ്ഞു. അതുകൊണ്ടു് ഇങ്ങിനെയുള്ള കടം വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കുന്ന ഒരു പദ്ധതി ഗവമ്മെൻറു നടപ്പിൽ വരുത്തേണ്ടതാണു്. ഇതിൽ ക്രൂടൻതലായി ഈ സംഗതിയെക്കുറിച്ചു പറയുവാൻ ഞാൻ വിചാരിക്കുന്നില്ല. ഗവമ്മെൻറു് ഇതിനും അമാന്തം വിചാരിക്കുന്നപക്ഷം, ഇനിയും മന്ദഗതിയായി പ്രവൃത്തിക്കുവാൻ വിചാരിക്കുന്നപക്ഷം ഈ നാട്ടിലെ കർഷകരെ നശിപ്പിച്ചു എന്ന മഹാശാപം ഗവമ്മെൻറിൻെറ തലയിൽ വരും. ഈ നാട്ടുകാരെ രക്ഷിക്കേണ്ട ചുമതല ഗവമ്മെൻറിനാണു്. ഈ സംഗതി ഗവമ്മെൻറിനെ ഉൽബോധിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു ഞാൻ ഇതിനെ ശക്തിയായി പിന്താങ്ങിക്കൊള്ളുന്നു.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan.—Mr. President, Sir, I beg to support the spirit of this motion. It is to formulate a scheme of scaling down debts. Formation of Debt Conciliation Boards is one such scheme to scale down debts and I do not find anything dangerous. There is a Bill in the Madras Presidency to that effect; and what the Hon'ble Member for Cranganur wants is some such scheme to relieve the agricultural debtors. I have stated in my budget speech that the attitude of the

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Government to this all important matter has been one of indifference. They have conceded the point. But what has really happened? Till now they have not done anything. I remember the Diwan Prisident in his speech at Irinjalakkuda said that Voluntary Liquidation Boards should be formed by the villagers themselves. But we want a little more assistance; a statutory Debt Conciliation Board must be established. For instance, if there is a recalcitrant creditor, there must be something to induce him to come to an amicable settlement with the debtor. Some such statutory power should be given to the board. For that purpose three non-officials including myself had introduced Bills and I had requested the Government to accept one of these Bills as a Government measure. But Government could not accept any one of the Bills. Government could have in the interests of the public adopted any one of these measures as a Government Bill. In that case this Bill would have become law by this time. That is all I have to say.

Mr. A. Sankara Menon.—The exact motion before the House is that this Council recommends to the Government to formulate a scheme to scale down agricultural debts in proportion to the fall in prices.

With regard to this, I only wish to point out certain difficulties. There is already a Bill before the House for the establishment of Debt Conciliation Boards. If Debt Conciliation Boards are established, then, each debt can be dealt with on its own merits. Each creditor and debtor can be made to face each other and all the facts in favour of the one or the other can be placed before the Board and can be talked over between them and a settlement effected. Suppose as a general rule this motion is accepted, what would be the result so far as the Co-operative Societies are concerned; what would be the result so far as Banks are concerned; what would be the result so far as persons who have lent money to agriculturists but are themselves not agriculturists and owe money to others are concerned? The motion is confined to agricultural debtors. If the motion is that with regard to all debtors their debts should be scaled down according to the fall in prices, I can understand the situation. But the motion is not that. Suppose there is a creditor to whom money is due from an agriculturist but he is a debtor to others and that creditor is not an agriculturist. So far as the debt due by him is concerned he is to pay down the whole debt, but with regard to the debts that he is entitled to get, he can collect only according to the scale as laid down by

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any Regulation passed by Government. So also with regard to the Co-operative Credit Societies. Can they be said to be agriculturists in any sense? What would be their position if this rule is adopted with regard to the debts due to them by the agriculturists? So also with regard to bankers. What would be their position? Are they agriculturists in any way? So far as they are concerned, are they not bound to count down the deposits made to them; and if the debts due to them from agriculturists are to be scaled down, what would be the result? My submission is this. With regard to each debt it has to be approached from a stand-point different from every other debt. Therefore, I say if the Debt Conciliation Bill is passed, the Board can deal with all these matters and sufficient relief will be obtained by the agriculturist debtors. But to have a law for scaling down the debts without reference to the way in which debts were incurred, the time at which debts were incurred, the persons to whom debts are due, that scheme will spell great danger to very many associations and persons, and therefore should not be adopted by this House.

I wish to add one more word. To which debts is this scaling down to apply? Are they to apply to all debts incurred after the economic depression? Suppose the debts were incurred yesterday. Suppose the debts were incurred last year. Is this to apply to all those debts which were incurred after the economic depression had its full effect?

I repeat that there are difficulties in the practical application of any rule to be laid down for the scaling down of debts. My submission is that relief has been afforded to some extent by the Government advancing loans. There is already a Land Mortgage Bank in existence and I do not agree with the members who say that no great relief will be afforded by the loans granted by the Land Mortgage Bank. There is also a Bill before the House which if passed into law, will enable debtors to face the creditors in the presence of the Board and effect settlements according to the justice of each claim. These are the steps that have been taken. I have however no objection if it is suggested that the interest should be reduced. That is a definite proposition. But with regard to the scaling down of debts according to the fall in prices, which are the prices to be taken? I only say there are ever so many difficulties in the proposition put before the House.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—May I know whether the Hon'ble Member is in favour of introducing compulsory debt conciliation boards?

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Mr. A. Sankara Menon.—I may say that with regard to each debt, the board may be given ample power to deal with it in any way it likes. But the present Bill does not go to that extent, I agree. But so far as I am personally concerned I have no objection to that. But to have a general rule with regard to all the debts without reference to the way in which the debts were incurred, the times when they were incurred and the persons to whom the debts are due, does not commend itself to me.

മിസ്റ്റർ ടി. കെ നായർ.— സർ, ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട തൃപ്പൂണിത്തുറ മെമ്പർ ഡെറ്റ് കൺസീലിയേഷൻ ബോർഡിന്റെ ചെയർമാനായിരുന്ന സ്ഥിതിക്ക് അദ്ദേഹം ചില സംഗതികൾ ഇവിടെ ധരിപ്പിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. എന്നാൽ അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞ സംഗതികളൊന്നും ഈ ബില്ലിൽ ഇല്ലെന്നാണ് എന്റെ അഭിപ്രായം. ഇതു് ഒരു തത്വമില്ലാതെ പറയുകയാണെന്നു ഗവമ്മെൻറു വിചാരിക്കരുതു്. ഗവമ്മെൻറിന്റെ എക്കണോമിക്ക ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറുതന്നെ ർകൊല്ലം മുമ്പേ സാമ്പത്തികാധഃപതനം വന്ന എന്നാണു പറയുന്നതു്. എത്രകണ്ടു ഭൂമിയുടെ വില യിടിഞ്ഞുപോന്നുവോ അത്രകണ്ടു് ഈടു പോരാതെയായി, കടത്തിന്റെ ചുമതലയും കൂടി. ഇതു് ഇത്രവളരെ ആലോചിക്കേണ്ട സംഗതിയാണോ? ഭൂമിയുടെ വിലയിടിഞ്ഞാൽ കടം കൂട്ടം എന്നു പറയുന്നതു് ഒരു തത്വമല്ല. മുമ്പുണ്ടായിരുന്ന വില ഇന്നും വേണമെന്നു ഗവമ്മെൻറു് ഒരു വിളംബരം പാസാക്കിയാൽ മതി. ഭൂമിക്കു വിലയിടിഞ്ഞ ഇക്കാലത്തു കൊച്ചി രാജ്യത്തു് ആദ്യകാലത്തു് ഏതുതരത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നുവോ അതുപ്രകാരമുള്ള വില കൊടുത്തു് ഇപ്പോഴും വസ്തു വാങ്ങിക്കണമെന്നു് ഒരു വിളംബരം പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തിയാൽ ഞങ്ങൾക്കു രക്ഷയായി. അതു കൊണ്ടു ഞാൻ ഗവമ്മെൻറിനോടു പറയുന്നതു് ഒന്നുകിൽ ഭൂമിയുടെ വില കൂട്ടണം, അല്ലെങ്കിൽ കടം ചുരുക്കണം എന്നാണു്. ഡെറ്റു കൺസീലിയേഷൻ ബോർഡിൽ ഇങ്ങനെയുള്ള അധികാരം വരുന്നില്ല. അതു ലാൻറുമോർട്ടുഗേജു ബാങ്കു പോലെയാണു്. ഡെറ്റു കൺസീലിയേഷൻ ബോർഡു വേണമെന്നു റസല്യൂഷൻ പാസാക്കിച്ചതു ഞാനാണു്. ലാൻറുമോർട്ടുഗേജുബാങ്കു വേണമെന്നും റസല്യൂഷൻ പാസാക്കിച്ചതു ഞാനാണു്. അതെല്ലാം ഓരോ റസല്യൂഷൻ.

ഒരു രോഗിക്കു് ഒരു ഡാക്ടറെ വിളിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുവരുന്നു. ആ ഡോക്ടർ തർമ്മോമീറർ വച്ചു നോക്കിക്കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ അതൊരു സ്റ്റേജു്. പിന്നെ എനിമേട്ടുത്തു കിടത്തുന്നതു രണ്ടാമതൊരു സ്റ്റേജു്. പിന്നെ ഒരു പ്രിസ്കൃപ്ഷൻ കൊടുക്കുന്നു, അതു മൂന്നാമതൊരു സ്റ്റേജു്, രോഗിയെ രക്ഷിച്ചോ മരിച്ചോ എന്നുള്ളതാണു് അവസാനത്തെ സംഗതി. അതുപോലെയാണു് ലാൻറുമോർട്ടുഗേജു് ബാങ്കും. ഡെറ്റു് കൺസിലിയേഷൻ ബോർഡ് സ്ഥാപിച്ചു എന്നു പറയുന്നതു്.

* Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

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അതുകൊണ്ട് കടക്കാരെ രക്ഷിക്കുവാനുള്ള ഒരു വകുപ്പു ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട പ്രസിഡണ്ട് അവർകൾ ഈ ഡെറ്റ് കൺസിലിയേഷൻ ബില്ലിൽ ചേർക്കുവാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഞങ്ങൾക്കു വളരെ തൃപ്തിയായി, ഞങ്ങൾക്കു രക്ഷയുമായി.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—Sir, the Government have been well aware all along of the great emergency that is confronting the agriculturists of the State and from time to time they have been taking as vigorous action as possible to combat that emergency. I do not think that Hon'ble Members will forget the successive measures adopted by this Government to effect as good a solution as practicable to this situation. But if the solution has not been as adequate as desired by the Hon'ble Members, they will also remember the inherent difficulties attending the problem. This situation is perhaps unique in the annals of Cochin and does not appear as I shall presently be able to convince the House to admit of any easy or cut and dry solution. But before I proceed to state in brief the inherent difficulties of the situation let us for a moment see what has so far been done or achieved. I respectfully state that it is not quite fair—not to say grateful—for Hon'ble Members to forget all that the Government has strenously endeavoured to do to ameliorate the condition of the depressed agriculturists. It is only common courtesy.....

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—We are grateful.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—Some of the Hon'ble Members appear to have only a vague memory of things done. Let us recapitulate for a moment the statement of facts and in that connection I would also read a sentence or two beyond the passage from the Government Proceedings that was read by the Hon'ble mover of this motion. The mover of this motion satisfied himself by reading a portion out of the proceedings that the Government came to a finding two or three years ago that the extent of indebtedness had become oppressively high so far as the agriculturists are concerned. On that statement and without reading the following sentences the Hon'ble Member condemned the Government for not taking action to combat that position. If the Hon'ble Member had patience to read a little further he would have noticed that the Government being apparently perplexed with that emergency did their level best to find out solutions. As representative and able a committee as was forthcoming was appointed as Hon'ble Members very well know and that committee after elaborate enquiry submitted its

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report within a few months. As could have been anticipated by the very nature of the preplexing complexity of the problems involved, the report happened to be not unanimous. While a unanimous report was submitted on certain aspects of the problem several members of the Committee differed and differed widely with regard to the main problems that were confronting the Government viz., the question of confiscation or expropriation of scaling down of debts by whatever name you may call it. In that connection there were very divergent views, very vital differences of opinion and the Government found that taking all the circumstances relevant to the matter into consideration the problem was by no means capable of any easy or ready solution. The Government while thus baffled of the anticipated solution, although a forlorn hope, at once proceeded to act and act as vigorously as possible in such directions as appeared to them to be feasible. The Government persuaded or induced the highest Court of the land to issue a circular to protect the interests of the property owners who were judgment-debtors. I know that that the circular has been derided in some quarters in this Council as not being satisfactory enough.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—We are grateful to the Government for having done that.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Please give us more.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—If you will bear with me for a few minutes more, I will come to your point. I suppose it is not very pleasant to hear facts from this side. Now that circular while it has been often run down in this Council, if properly studied would convince the Hon'ble Members that it was a most useful one and probably unique in the annals of the Courts so far as the Indian States around Cochin are concerned. I know as a practising lawyer that in innumerable cases sales have been put off on the payment of small pittances. No Hon'ble Member can deny it.

Almost immediately following that the Kuri Proclamation was issued by the Government. Kuries, as Hon'ble Members are well aware, in this State in particular, are long standing institutions and on account of the fall in prices the kuri subscribers were in great distress. I am sure Hon'ble Members will agree with me that that was a highly beneficial action taken by the Government. The Kuri Proclamation has been of very great assistance to the agriculturists. Then on top of that a moratorium, another unprecedented step so far as this State and the neighbouring States are concerned, was declared by the

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Government for a period of six months. I am only stating these facts to show that it is not a case of apathy as suggested or insinuated by Hon'ble Members. Strenuous endeavours for a solution of the problem which would appear to have no ready solution were made from time to time by the Government. All along the Government finding that the idea of a total scaling of debts was not possible, the Government thought that whatever lay in their power should be done to ameliorate the condition of the agriculturists. So the special loan scheme, as Hon'ble Members are aware, was started and to work it out a staff involving several officers was appointed. On account mainly of the difficulties inherent in ascertaining the nature of the title of the properties proposed to be mortgaged, particularly due to the long standing attachments, the staff could not function as rapidly as they were expected to, with the result that some time was inevitably lost. But eventually that staff was not disbanded before about 3 lakhs had been disbursed. It was, however found that the loan scheme was not quite adequate and the Land Mortgage Bank was introduced. The Hon'ble Members would remember that for such an important institution like that, an institution that is expected to confer lasting benefits to the people, sound foundations are absolutely necessary. It was rather surprising that even though it was answered from the Government side this morning that within a couple of days or so loans will be given to the extent of 2 lakhs, still the Hon'ble Members show considerable impatience. One would think from the attitude of some members that a Land Mortgage Bank scheme is useless unless loans are granted off hand. Whose security is being offered. The Government has staked their credit on behalf of the Bank.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—In this particular case our case is that the Land Mortgage Bank is not useless, but that it is not enough to meet the situation.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—There is no justification whatsoever to show such impatience with regard to the Land Mortgage Bank. We cannot afford to take unnecessary risks. Now the further question is whether the Land Mortgage Bank is adequate. I should at once confess that no bank that can be devised by man can ever be adequate to save a man who is absolutely sunk in debts, who cannot be saved by anybody on earth but only by God's special dispensation.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—I anticipated you. (Laughter).

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—Just take the case of a man who

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has a debt of Rs. 10,000- and has only properties worth about 500 or 1000 rupees. Which Government in the world can save him? Do Hon'ble Members expect the State to do anything for such a man? After all the pattadars of the State amount only to about 7 per cent of the population. Don't think that I am unsympathetic towards the pattadars or the agriculturists. But let us consider things on their own merits. The pattadars do not amount to more than 7 per cent. 93 per cent of the population are not hereditary enjoyers of land. Do the Hon'ble Members think that the Government can go to the extent of altogether sacrificing the interests of this 93 per cent to save this 7 per cent? Would such action be a democratic measure?

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—By sacrificing the interests of this seven per cent you mean to help only a smaller number that is the capitalists? We do not want the Government to spend a single pie from the Government treasury. We only want to scale down the debts.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—If Hon'ble Members will have the patience to bear with me and hear what I have to say.....

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—We are impatient with your bad logic. (Laughter).

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—My point is this. Government has its own limitations. Government powers are strictly limited in matters like this. Government have to take into consideration the maintenance of the credit of the land.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—I anticipated that also.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—The Hon'ble Member seems to be a very good prophet. Suppose we interfere with the credit. By credit I mean mercantile credit, of the financial institutions like Banks by scaling down the debts due to them. Let us imagine it for a moment. Let us first and foremost consider that Cochin is only a speck on the great continent of India. We are hedged in on all sides by countries which are not bound by our Laws, and it is a commonplace fact that very many of us have business dealings with the citizens of neighbouring States. Suppose we scale down the debts by 50 per cent. Let us try and visualize the probable consequences. Suppose a bank has advanced money to agriculturists. The bank will get only 50 per cent. What will that Bank do when payment is to be made to the depositors outside the State? Do the Hon'ble Members desire the general scaling down of debts irrespective of the question whether the debtor is an agriculturist or not and even should Hon'ble Members be prepared to scale down all round, what would be the answer of the Hon'ble Members with regard

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to the other problem, viz., that we are surrounded on all sides by citizens of foreign States who have business dealings with us? Hon'ble Members will not forget that important fact. When I say that Government consider it their duty to maintain the credit of the State, I mean this aspect.

Mr. K. M Ibrahim.—Then how did you declare the Moratorium when British India had not done it?

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—I never said that we should never do what British India did not do. There is no use losing temper. Hon'ble Members will consider the great difficulties besetting the problem, the difficulties that baffled the 14 representatives that were appointed to the committee by the Government. Those representatives went throughout the State, collected a lot of evidence and finally differed and differed widely.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—How many were in favour of scaling down debts?

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—As for scaling down there was none. The Government have, on the other hand, given effect to the other measures suggested by the Committee.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—The most important measure you did not accept, namely the lowering of interest.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—It was on that recommendation that there was very great divergence.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—All the Government Members were for it. The Law Member, the Diwan Peishkar and the Secretary to the Diwan.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—Three is not fourteen.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—With the non-official members we constituted a majority.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—If you carefully read the report, it will be seen that this idea of scaling down the debts is not an easy proposition. I do not think that any modern Government, at any rate in South India, has adopted such a scheme. There have been much talk in the House about the classic example of Bhavanagar. Bhavanagar is a small State in Northern India infested with Sowcars and the Government eventually finding that these sharks had to be driven away, took some violent action.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—What are your banks here?

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Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Sowcars.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—I know on very good authority that the average minimum rate of interest in Bhavangar was 25 often ranging up to a maximum of even 200 per cent.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—I am told that even in Chittur we have got worse and more ridiculous rates of interest than in Bhavanagar. Has the Hon'ble Member read that, in the report?

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—I am aware of the veneer of truth underlying that statement. There is a practice in Chittur when writing pronotes of introducing a clause to the effect that unless the stipulated 12 per cent is regularly paid, interest at 37½ per cent would be payable, but I understand that such high rate of interest is hardly ever realised. But even assuming that such rates of interest are prevalent, we cannot compare it to the ordinary rate of 70 and 80 per cent in the famous Bhavanagar State.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—What is your authority?

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—Take any report and you can see it. What is it that was actually done there? It appears that by the peculiarities of land tenure there all lands there were personally owned by the Ruler as much as to say the Ruler could at any moment ask land owners to get out of the land. When these sowcars infested the land the ruler called them and said:—"If you people want to continue your profession, I have also got some rights here. Either you come to a reasonable settlement or get away from here. You will not get anything unless you are reasonable". Eventually an agreement was come to. These people were given the entire principal with 12 per cent interest. The money necessary was found by the State to whom 4 per cent interest was given by the debtors. In the meantime the security of all the landed property of the debts was assumed by the State. That is the famous solution adopted in the Bhavanagar State. There are two distinguishing features here. One is the extremely high rate of interest, another is that the debts were all owned by a professional class of money lenders. In Cochin what on the other hand is the situation? I do not think that I will be exaggerating when I say that at least 80 per cent of the debts are owed by agriculturists to agriculturists.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Question.

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Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—These questions put in an irresponsible manner can only be ignored.

The Hon'ble Member for Cranganur did not even care to appear before the Antony Committee to give evidence when it went to Cranganur especially for his benefit.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Because I knew that the Cochin Government will never bring into action the recommendations of the Committee.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—Then, Sir, most of the creditors are agriculturist subjects of His Highness the Maharaja. Any interference with the debts due to them will in all probability drive the so-called creditors to the insolvent courts. Do the Hon'ble Members want to attempt to advance the financial conditions of the so-called debtors at the expense of the agriculturist crediters? That is the vital difference between Bhavanagar and Cochin. The Antony Committee again found that ordinarily, excepting a very few extraordinary cases, the rates of interest ranged between 9 and 12 per cent, which Hon'ble Members will I am sure agree is nothing very exorbitant. Hon'ble Members will consider that while the maximum rate of interest provided in the Usurious Loans Regulation which has been brought into force is only 12 per cent there is no such maximum limit fixed in Madras and other places and there 18 per cent is taken as a fair rate.

Now the legal difficulties cannot also be ignored and the Government have serious responsibilities towards all classes of His Highness' subjects. We cannot jeopardise the condition of the tottering agriculturist creditor for the supposed but problamatic salvation of the agriculturist debtor. On the other hand take the case of any debtor who has a real claim to be saved. That man, I say, is easily saved. The Land Mortgage Bank is ready for his salvation.

Mr. K. M. Kunhi Moideen.—We are satisfied with your reply.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—I am not satisfied (Laughter).

Sir, arguments are not pleasing to the Hon'ble Members, especially when stating what the Government have been doing to ameliorate the condition of these poor stricken ryots. If you state facts it will be by no means pleasing to them.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—We wish to know what you are going to do further?

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Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—This Government have all along been doing whatever they can towards a solution of this problem. The Hon'ble Deputy President was just now referring to the Debt Conciliation Bill. The report has been submitted by the Select Committee and Government I am sure will do whatever they think reasonable and fair in that connection. Beyond that to the scaling down of debts in its bare naked form which means expropriation or confiscation, I am afraid this Government cannot find their way to agree to. It is beset with very great dangers not only to the public creditor but also to the agriculturist classes. Such a course Government regret they are not going to launch themselves into just now. I would conclude by exhorting Hon'ble Members to remember the real difficulties besetting the solution of this problem and to remember the various endeavours made by the Government from time to time to help the agriculturists.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—What more will you do? You need not tell us the things the Government have done. That we know.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.—What more do the Hon'ble Members expect the Government to do? Short of wild schemes like this Government claim that they have done more than what any other Government in India has done in this direction. I may assure the Hon'ble Members that this problem is engaging the attention of the Government and Government will always do whatever they can to ameliorate the condition of the agriculturists consistent with their other duties and responsibilities.

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon.—Sir, with regard to the Debt Conciliation Bill before the Government there is absolutely no element of compulsion involved. The conciliation should be on a voluntary basis. But irrespective of the merits of the question, may I know whether the Government will be inclined to accept any principle of compulsion introduced in the Debt Conciliation Bill?

Mr. President.—When the Bill actually comes before the Government they will decide about it.

Mr. M. Sivarama Menon.—May I know whether any indication can be given now so that we may be in a position to know as to whether the Government will be able to support any such motion when it is brought forward?

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Mr. President.—Government will have to examine all the implications underlying this proposition. For one thing this motion lays upon the Government a responsibility which no Government in the world will be prepared to undertake and which many big Governments in the world attempted and finally confessed a failure. It simply asks the Government to formulate a scheme for scaling down the debts. No constructive idea has been given as to what form the Bill should take. Now this problem of what has been called in economics dis-equilibria between money values and the value of products is a problem which does not affect merely the State but which has baffled the whole world since 1930. Therefore this is not a problem which affects the Cochin agriculturists alone but the whole world is faced with this and it is not possible for the Government now to say to what extent they will agree to any element of compulsion in the Bill.

Now one point relating to the position of Banks has been referred to by the Hon'ble Deputy President and the Law Member. In modern societies every bank trades with other peoples' money. If you take the Balance Sheet of any big Bank you will find the paid up capital to be a couple of lakhs but the deposits amount to crores of rupees. Suppose a Bank of that nature has lent a great deal of money to the agriculturists and you scale down the debts. How are they to return the money to the depositors? These are all facts which have to be gone into more carefully. Some members think that these are matters of detail. The whole efficacy and practicability of the scheme depends upon the details. I have applied my mind to the study of this problem as a student of economics, but I have not been able to come to any conclusion. If as the Head of the administration here I am able to solve this problem, I will be hailed as a prophet not merely in Cochin but all the world over. A tremendous experiment has been tried by President Roosevelt in the United States for the past four years and what is the result today? Today the unemployment figures stand at about 10 millions. That amounts to 1/10 of the population of the United States, in spite of the tremendous experiment which was launched upon by President Roosevelt. In view of these things the Government should not be taken to task for not having done anything in that direction. I am sure Hon'ble Members will apply their minds to the practical aspect of the question. When the Debt Conciliation Bill comes up before the Council, and Hon'ble Members suggest any practical scheme, Government will certainly be prepared to consider them and

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do what they can in the matter. But the motion as it stands is absolutely of no practical value and no Government in the world has succeeded in solving this problem.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—In order to strengthen the hands of the Government in introducing an element of compulsion in the Debt Conciliation Bill we will press this motion to a division.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—Why was not the Select Committee Report presented in this session of the Council? In fact the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Bill had given notice.

Mr. President.—It will come in the legislative session and not in this session.

In fact if the Hon'ble Members simply want to vote upon this, I have no objection. It absolutely leads us nowhere.

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim.—I would like to give my point of view tomorrow.

The House rose for the day at 5-10 p. m.

B. V. KRISHNANKUTTY MENON,

Secretary to the Council.

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